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DEFICIENCIES IN GDR URANIUM MINERS' HOUSING PROJECT

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For the past 3 years, the Schwarza Valley in Thuringia, between Saalfeld and Rudolstadt, has been the scene of intensive surface mining for uranium ore by Wismut AG. There has been a heavy influx of miners from Upper Silesia and from the Erzgebirge.

The population of the former resort town of Bad Blankenburg has risen from 5,100 to 8,000. A housing project with 1,075 apartments, opened after less than one year of building time, was found to be deficient in many respects: inefficient light switches; poor wiring; and substitute plastic pipes, which break when hot water is poured into the sinks. Furthermore, the water supply does not function very well. The pumps of the improvised, small waterworks are driven by superannuated motors, which were borrowed from the Schwarza artificial-fiber plant. This measure had to be taken because the transformers built by a Leipzig plant and originally installed at the waterworks broke down on the first day of operation. The shopping street was simply forgotten. The City Council finally approved one of the construction sheds for use as a general store.

Confronted with these deficiencies, Wismut AG, the builder, turned the whole housing project over to the City Council.

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